

Anti-Muslim blogger facing hate crime charge ran for mayor of Mississauga and came in second place

Kevin J. Johnston's next court date is later this month

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Kevin J. Johnston selling Faith Goldy for mayor t-shirts.

Elections in Ontario last month drew international media attention to the failed candidacy of Faith Goldy, a self-proclaimed propagandist (https://www.antihate.ca/who_is_faith_goldy) for the alt-right neo-Nazi movement. Although she ended the Toronto mayoral race in distant third place, she received more than 25,000 votes, or 3.4 per cent of the total ballots cast.

In nearby Mississauga, Canada's sixth largest city, anti-Muslim blogger Kevin J. Johnston came second in the mayoral race, securing 13.5 per cent of the vote — despite facing a hate crime charge.

For many, Johnston may have been the default protest vote against Mayor Bonnie Crombie. The third-place candidate received less than 4 per cent of the vote.

Police charged Johnston in June 2017 (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/kevin-johnston-hate-crime-1.4219185>) with wilful promotion of hatred against Muslims following a five-month investigation. The case is still before the courts. If convicted, he could face up to two years in prison (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/section-319.html>).

Johnston's record of anti-Muslim activism goes back several years.

In 2015, he led a racist campaign against a proposed mosque in Mississauga. On his website StopTheMosque.com, Johnston claimed (<https://www.mississauga.com/news-story/5959266-mayor-called-on-to-apologize-in-meadowvale-islamic-centre-squabble/>) without evidence that the Meadowvale Islamic Centre would lead to an increase in vandalism and sexual assaults, and that the mosque's presence would erode free speech and women's rights. He published an article on his website in 2016 (<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2016/10/10/inflammatory-article-about-mississauga-finds-new->

home-online.html) baselessly accusing Muslim high school students of widespread sexual assault against their classmates and inciting Mississauga residents to “take the law into your own hands (<https://www.mississauga.com/news-story/6903299-mississauga-website-yanks-inflammatory-article-about-muslims-mayor/>).”

Johnston publishes daily videos on his website, where he has called for violence and harassment against Muslims. In early 2017, he offered a \$1,000 bounty (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/muslim-students-praying-video-peel-1.4048991>) for videos of Muslim children praying in Peel Region schools. In another video, according to the Toronto Star (<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2017/08/08/hate-laws-put-reasonable-limits-on-freedom-of-speech.html>), Johnston said it was time to “take our masculinity back and beat the living hell out of Muslims.”

“Pin them down on the ground, and beat them until they pass out. And when they’re passed out, you beat them further; and when they’re on the ground passed out, kick them, break a kneecap, break an elbow, press their hands backwards turn their wrists sideways, start breaking these guys down,” Johnston said in the video.

Leila Nasr, the communications coordinator for the National Council of Canadian Muslims, said such quotes underline how disturbing it is that Johnston received 16,079 votes for mayor.

“Mississauga is an incredibly diverse community with a significant Muslim population, which makes the vile sentiments expressed by Mr. Johnston even more concerning to us,” Nasr told the Canadian Anti-Hate Network. “Like many in the community we are very troubled that these elements not only exist, but have increased in prominence so quickly.”

Johnston also regularly attacks women, the LGBTQ+ community, and others. His videos rarely receive more than a few hundreds views online, and his crowdfunded Patreon account receives a paltry \$31 a month from supporters. Johnston has appeared on Rebel Media shows (https://www.therebel.media/ezra_levant_july_25_2017) and until at least December of 2017, he co-hosted a YouTube series called Rebel Yell with Rebel correspondent David Menzies. He has also been a guest (<https://web.archive.org/web/20181101171540/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WZ2XlgSJNY>) on the far-right conspiracy outlet InfoWars.

Johnston previously ran for mayor of Mississauga in 2014, when he came in 11th place with 741 votes (<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/electionresults/2014en>), comprising 0.5% of the final tally. His second-place finish last month marks a dramatic increase in support.

Johnston’s campaign appeared to downplay his inflammatory views. On his campaign website (<https://web.archive.org/web/20181102205036/http://www.kevinjohnston.ca/>), Johnston listed housing, crime, and transportation issues as some of his top priorities. Johnston claims he would have won if the media covered his campaign. He was not invited to the main election debate

(<https://themedium.ca/news/kevin-johnston-denied-entry-into-candidates-forum/>), held at the University of Toronto's Mississauga campus. The Mississauga News published an op-ed by Johnston (<https://www.mississauga.com/community-story/8899205-meet-your-mayoral-candidate-for-mississauga-kevin-j-johnston/>) about his campaign that didn't mention his hate crime charge and ran without any sort of editorial note.

In an interview with the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, Johnston said that while his campaign website highlighted local issues, he did not hide his views about Islam and other social issues during private conversations with Mississauga voters. He claims to have taken part in over 100 public speaking engagements.

Unlike in 2014, Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie did not face an established opponent in the election and won re-election with 77% of the vote, suggesting Johnston benefited as the default alternative or protest vote against the incumbent from voters who may not have been aware of his record.

"In the better part of 15,000 people I spoke to over the course of five months," says Johnston, "everyone said the same thing - they hate Bonnie Crombie - they just didn't know who the alternative was."

Johnston continues to produce videos targeting Muslims, LGBTQ+ persons and others and said he plans to run more political campaigns in the future, as well as finish a documentary (<https://www.buzzfeed.com/justinling/this-far-right-youtube-conspiracist-was-welcomed-by-the>) that denies Myanmar is carrying out a campaign of what the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing" against the country's Muslim Rohingya minority. Johnston was allowed into the country to work on this 'documentary', escorted by military handlers, while Reuters journalists were imprisoned.

Johnston livestreamed our interview on his Youtube and Facebook channels. In the same video he says that "LGBTQ laws" would legalize the rape of four-year-olds by adult men. At other points in the interview and his subsequent monologue, Johnston said Islam is not a religion but a political ideology, and that he refuses to eat halal meat or fly on airplanes with Muslim pilots. In response to a viewer question, he encouraged parents to train their children to respond to bullying with extreme violence such as breaking bones, adding that the children's criminal records would be expunged at age 18 anyway. In arguing for the superiority of "Western culture," Johnston said: "African culture right now is to just walk around the country and kill white people. Rape them first, then kill them second." He described new immigrants from Muslim-majority countries as violent "psychopaths."

"We have imported 100,000 psychopaths into this country and they're going to choke you, they're going to hit your kids, they're going to lift your daughters' skirts up and grab their asses," Johnston said.

Johnston says his lawyer was recently in court to receive disclosure from the crown regarding the hate crime charge and that there will be another court date at the end of November to review that disclosure.

Asked about the election result, Mississauga Mayor Crombie said the city remains a place where diversity is respected: "I think we can all be more vigilant to call out hate and discrimination and to better vet our candidates for office."

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Kevin J Johnston (/tags/kevin_j_johnston) **Mississauga (/tags/mississauga)**

hate crime (/tags/hate_crime) **anti-woman (/tags/anti_woman)**

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